

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **RHODE ISLAND BAR EXAMINATION**

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**Question:**    **What Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules apply to Rhode Island bar examination applicants?**

**Answer:**       Article II, Rules 1 through 8 of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules.

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**Question:**    **Does Rhode Island have reciprocity agreement with other jurisdictions?**

**Answer:**       No. Rhode Island does, however, allow out-of-state attorneys who have been engaged in the full-time practice of law for five (5) out of the ten (10) years immediately preceding the filing of a bar application to take only the essay portion of the examination. Please see Article II, Rule 2 of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules.

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**Question:**    **What is the main test administration difference between Article II, Rule 1 and Rule 2 of the Rhode Island Supreme Court Rules?**

**Answer:**       Rule 1 applicants are required to take both days of the two-day Rhode Island Bar Examination. Generally, Rule 1 applicants are recent law school graduates or those attorneys who do not meet the requirements of Rule 2.

Rule 2 applicants only attend day one of the two-day Rhode Island Bar Examination. Rule 2 applicants are attorney admission applicants who have been engaged in the active practice of law or teaching of law for at least five (5) years of the last ten (10) years immediately preceding the filing of his or her application. “Active” means full-time.

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**Question:**    **What is the application deadline?**

**Answer:**       December 1 for the February exam and May 1 for the July exam.

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**Question:**    **What if I do not have all my documents in time for the application deadline?**

**Answer:**       Although having a completed application in by the filing deadline is preferred, supplemental forms will be accepted after the deadline date. The Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar and credit report (obtained from Experian, Transunion, or Equifax), request for testing accommodations (if applicable), and a check in the amount of \$600 must be submitted by the filing deadline. These application materials must be postmarked by the filing deadline to be deemed timely.

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**Question: Do I submit the supplemental forms with my application?**

**Answer:** Forms that must be completed by an individual other than the applicant should be submitted by that individual. The Certificate of Dean/Administrator of Law School, Certificates of Good Moral Character, and the Employment Verification Forms should be forwarded directly to the Committee on Character and Fitness from the individuals who complete the forms.

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**Question: The employment section of the Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar asks for a listing of all employment where I have been employed six (6) months or longer beginning after my 21<sup>st</sup> birthday. Do I include internships and clerkships?**

**Answer:** Yes – paid and unpaid.

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**Question: What do I do if a Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar question is not applicable to me?**

**Answer:** If a question is not applicable to you, please indicate as such. Please do not leave answers to questions blank.

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**Question: What if I cannot answer a question fully?**

**Answer:** All Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar questions must be answered fully. If you cannot answer a question fully, please provide an addendum to the question explaining why.

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**Question: If I am a male, do I have to provide my Selective Service Number?**

**Answer:** Yes. If you do not have the number you must obtain a number and submit that information in your Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar.

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**Question: If I attended two (2) law schools, do I need to provide law school applications from both law schools?**

**Answer:** Yes, along with copies of the letters sent to the law schools requesting those applications.

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**Question:**     **Do you require Certificates of Good Standing from every jurisdiction I am a member of even if I am inactive in that jurisdiction?**

**Answer:**       Yes, we require Certificates of Good Standing from every jurisdiction and every court in a jurisdiction, if applicable. For example, Massachusetts state, Massachusetts federal, and First Circuit Court of Appeals in Massachusetts. Applicants need not be active in all jurisdictions, but they must be in good standing. Accordingly, applicants must rectify administrative suspensions in order to pursue their application for admission to the Rhode Island Bar, which could include resigning in good standing from a state bar, if necessary.

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**Question:**     **Do I need to provide a criminal background check for any time spent abroad?**

**Answer:**       No.

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**Question:**     **Is a national criminal background check acceptable?**

**Answer:**       No. Applicants must obtain a background check from each state where he or she resided for six (6) months or more since turning the age of eighteen (18) in accordance with the policies in that jurisdiction. Please see the criminal history record repositories listing on our website.

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**Question:**     **Do I need my handwriting sample witnessed?**

**Answer:**       Yes. It is generally done through the Office of the Dean for Rule 1 applicants. Rule 2 applicants only need to have their handwriting sample notarized.

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**Question:**     **When do applicants get interviewed before the Committee on Character and Fitness?**

**Answer:**       All applicants will be interviewed by a member of the Committee on Character and Fitness one (1) month prior to the exam. They are held at the Rhode Island Supreme Court, 250 Benefit Street and generally last fifteen (15) minutes.

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**Question:**     **Do I need to bring anything with me to the Committee on Character and Fitness interview?**

**Answer:**       Yes, all applicants must bring two (2) color copies of a valid photo identification (i.e., license or passport), proof of citizenship, or legal residence. Additionally, all applicants must bring any outstanding items from their application. Rule 2 applicants must also provide an affidavit setting forth how they meet the five (5) year full-time practice requirement.

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**Question:**     **Where will the Rhode Island Bar Exam be held?**

**Answer:**       Both examination days are held at the Rhode Island Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, Rhode Island unless notified otherwise.

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**Question:**     **What is tested on Tuesday?**

**Answer:**       Tuesday is essay day. It consists of three (3) Rhode Island local questions (ninety (90) minutes timed), a short break, one (1) Multistate Performance Test (MPT) (ninety (90) minutes timed), and then a one-hour lunch break is given. The six (6) Multistate Essay Examination (MEE) questions (three (3) hours timed) will be administered in the afternoon.

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**Question:**     **What is tested on Wednesday?**

**Answer:**       The morning and afternoon portions of the Multistate Bar Examination (MBE). The morning session will begin at 8:30 a.m. (three (3) hours timed) and then a one-hour lunch break is given. The afternoon session (three (3) hours timed) will commence at approximately 1:00 p.m.

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**Question:**     **Is there a laptop program option available?**

**Answer:**       All applicants are permitted to use their laptop for the essay portion of the examination (Tuesday) at no additional cost. This service is strictly optional but applicants wishing to use their laptop must register directly with *ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc.* by the registration deadline. A representative from *ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc.* will be onsite during the essay portion to assist laptop users. For more information, please visit the *ExamSoft Worldwide, Inc.* website at [www.examsoft.com/ribar](http://www.examsoft.com/ribar). The use of a laptop is highly recommended for applicants whose handwriting is illegible.

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**Question:**     **How do I obtain a copy of my previously submitted bar application?**

**Answer:**       Please send a formal letter request, a check made payable to the Rhode Island Supreme Court in the amount of \$25.00 along with a self-addressed, stamped envelope suitable for the twenty-three (23) page Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar. Copies of the complete Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar will be provided only to bar applicants. If asked to send a copy directly to another jurisdiction, only Sections A and D of the Petition/Questionnaire for Admission to the Rhode Island Bar will be provided.

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**Question:** If I am sitting concurrently in another jurisdiction how do I transfer my MBE score to a different jurisdiction?

**Answer:** You will need to fill out the MBE transfer form and send it in with a check for \$25.00 payable to the Rhode Island Supreme Court, 250 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903. The MBE transfer form is available on the Supreme Court website and must be submitted by February 1 for the February exam and July 1 for the July examination.

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**Question:** If I am sitting for the MBE in another jurisdiction, how do I transfer my score to Rhode Island?

**Answer:** You will need to request that through the other jurisdiction. To ensure that it is forwarded properly, please have them forward it directly to the Rhode Island Board of Bar Examiners, Rhode Island Supreme Court, 250 Benefit Street, Providence, RI 02903.

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**Question:** When are the results of the bar examinations released?

**Answer:** We typically release the February bar exam results in May and the July bar exam results in November.

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**Question:** After I pass the exam and am sworn in, when can I begin practicing as a Rhode Island attorney? What is my admission date?

**Answer:** Applicants have three (3) months from their swearing-in date to register with the Rhode Island Supreme Court. It is only after you register and obtain a bar number that you are officially admitted as an attorney. The date you register is your admission date.

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**Question:** What if I decide not to take the bar exam after submitting my application?

**Answer:** If after applying you choose not to sit for the bar examination, you must either defer to the next examination or withdraw. Applicants choosing to defer must submit a letter of intent to defer with a check made payable to the Rhode Island Supreme Court in the amount of \$300.00. Your deferral request will only allow you to defer to the next scheduled exam. If you decide to withdraw, then you must submit a formal withdrawal letter and your application file will be closed. Withdrawals are final. If a withdrawn applicant would like to sit for a later Rhode Island Bar Exam, he or she must submit an entirely new application and fee.

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**Question:**     **Who do I contact for questions about the Rhode Island Bar Examination?**

**Answer:**     Bar Administrator, 250 Benefit Street, Providence, Rhode Island 02903  
[ribarexam@courts.ri.gov](mailto:ribarexam@courts.ri.gov). We will respond via e-mail to your inquiry as soon as possible.

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